



The 2016 itinerary June 9-16

Day 1: Kickoff banquet in Atlanta with guest speaker Rep. Brooks Coleman, Chairman of the Georgia House Education Committee

Day 2: Team building and leadership activities; flight to Washington, D.C.

Day 3: Tour Mount Vernon and Holocaust Memorial Museum; dinner at Union Station; guided tour of MLK, FDR, Jefferson and World War II memorials

Day 4: Guided tour of Arlington National Cemetery and wreath-laying ceremony at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, as well as visits to Lincoln Memorial, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans memorials and the National Archives; Toby's Dinner Theatre for play ("Peter Pan")

Day 5: NRECA All-States Youth Day Program; tour National Mall/Washington Monument; explore Smithsonian museums and National Gallery of Art; sunset cruise on Potomac

Day 6: Tour Supreme Court; visit Newseum; tour Washington National Cathedral; attend U.S. Marine Corps Sunset Parade at Iwo Jima Memorial

Day 7: Meet with Georgia U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson and Georgia congressional delegation; tour Capitol; visit Madame Tussauds Wax Museum; farewell dinner/dance

Day 8: Flight back to Atlanta

Investing in tomorrow's leaders

It's happened every June for the past 52 years. From each corner of the nation, high school students meet in Washington, D.C., for a unique leadership experience, the Washington Youth Tour (WYT). Since 1964, nearly 50,000 students from rural areas have participated in the WYT, giving them an opportunity of a lifetime and a chance to develop their leadership abilities. The WYT, Georgia's oldest leadership program for teens, is fully sponsored by 38 of the state's EMCs, including Sumter EMC. This year 114 Georgia students participated in the WYT.

The students quickly discover the Youth Tour is more than a trip; it is a lesson in leadership. Delegates learn about the electric cooperative movement, American history and how their government works. They meet Georgia's representatives in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, participate in National Youth Day and partake of Washington's sights.

LOUIS TONSMEIRE / PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GAYLE HARTMAN

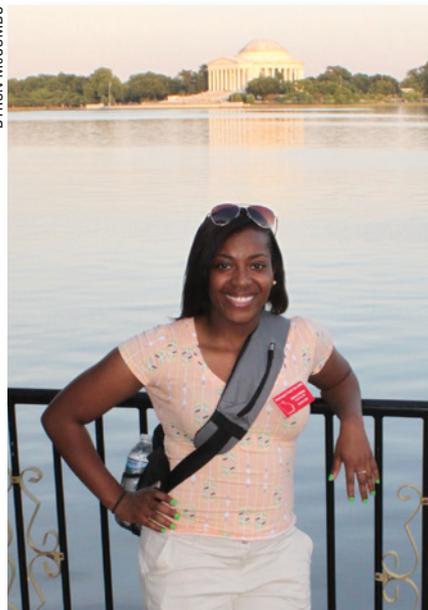


Kahria Hadley of Americus, the daughter of Sumter EMC members Kimothy and Tawnya Hadley, represented Sumter EMC and Americus-Sumter High School on the 2016 Washington Youth Tour.

Delegates return home inspired by their visits to national monuments, including the Jefferson, Lincoln and FDR memorials, where they reflect on the words of leaders who helped define and uphold our nation's guiding principles. At the Smithsonian, delegates explore art, science, nature and America's culture and history. When they visit the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans' memorials and, especially, Arlington National Cemetery, they realize the ultimate price of freedom paid by our servicemen and servicewomen.

"Electric co-ops are firmly committed to investing in the leadership potential of the students in our community," says Greg Crowder, Vice President of Marketing and Administration for Sumter EMC. "We know they will take their place as tomorrow's leaders and hopefully contribute to a better future for themselves and their communities."

BYRON McCOMBS



As Georgia's delegation walked from the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial to the FDR attraction, Kahria stopped to pose for a photo with the Jefferson Memorial as a backdrop.

My Youth Tour leadership experience

BY KAHRIA HADLEY

Participating in the Washington Youth Tour helped me grow as a person by making me realize:

The world is mine to conquer. So many powerful people have used this experience as a steppingstone to power their careers and to better themselves. One example is Tim Cook, a Youth Tour alumnus who is now the CEO of Apple Inc.

The Youth Tour is not just an opportunity for people who want to work in politics but in every field, and participants have built upon their experience to create successful lives, both professionally and personally.

This trip can be the beginning of a powerful legacy for the students who really take charge and make the experience worthwhile. Meeting powerful people, such as Sen. Johnny Isakson, and being able to talk to him helped me realize that even though I am from a small town, I can make big things happen as long as I put my mind to whatever I want to do in life. I can

be a catalyst for change that impacts many people.

Also, being surrounded by students who have the same dreams and aspirations I have inspired me. It's empowering to know there are so many people who want to make positive changes in whatever they do and wherever they go. Participating in the Youth Tour has helped me so much, and it is something I will appreciate for the rest of my life.

My advice to future WYT delegates:

Do not be afraid to put yourself out there. Obviously, to be nominated and selected for the Youth Tour, you must be inquisitive and intelligent. But to get the full experience, don't be afraid of meeting people, talking to others or making things happen. Ask plenty of questions. Take a million pictures. Volunteer for all opportunities available, and do everything you can to make the trip enjoyable and memorable.

Also, take in the atmosphere. Try to meet delegates from other

BYRON MCCOMBS



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“While looking at the Washington Monument, my friends and I took in its greatness and appreciated the beauty of the scene.” From left are Kahria Hadley, Ashlee Dixon (Georgia EMC), Deondria Hawkins (Mitchell EMC) and Maya Campbell (Coastal Electric).

states. Trade the stickers and pins. With students from 44 states in attendance, there are plenty of opportunities to explore. Understand that the experience is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Make every effort to absorb all you're experiencing, and appreciate the history and beauty our country has to offer. Enjoy the museums, attractions and everything you see and hear. Have fun and appreciate every moment.

“All 114 members of the Georgia delegation wanted to take a picture that showed our unity as a group, so we all dabbled it out right in front of the Washington Monument.”